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Renata Hesse, Trial Attorney
Suite 1200 - Antitrust Division
Department of Justice
601 D Street NW
Washington, DC 20530

RE: NO!!! to Microsoft Settlement Proposal

Dear Ms. Hesse, Department of Justice:

I am writing to strenuously oppose the proposed settlement with the Microsoft Corporation. I think that it is extremely unwise, after a judgement that Microsoft has indeed abused its monopoly power, to then turn around and reward Microsoft by giving them a way out of responsibility which furthers their penetration of the academic market.

This generosity to Microsoft is ludicrous. It would be much more just were Microsoft to be required to establish an enormous trust fund from which schools could draw funds to purchase hardware, services, and software *of their own choosing*. Further, allowing Microsoft to "give" in-kind contributions of their own software allows Microsoft to arbitrarily determine the "value" of what they give out - undoubtedly at a factor of many times their actual expense, so that the "value" of the settlement can be inflated for public relations purposes.

At this time there are many more cost-effective (and democratic) possibilities for software in academic settings. Linux and the BSDs are *better* operating systems, created in a collaborative manner that is more in tune with ideal academic and democratic principles. The *choices* presented by these alternatives are needed to stimulate the creativity of the next generation of cyber scholars and programmers. The manner in which they are developed models the community-minded creativity we want from young citizens. Should we really just surrender to the Microsoft monopoly? More may be at stake here than just "where do you want to go *today!*"

In the long struggle between the Department of Justice (representing the American people!) and Microsoft, Microsoft has relied on the rapid nature of change in technology to outrun their responsibility for abuse of their monopoly power, employing delaying tactics and legal shenanigans coupled with well-funded misinformation. Many superior software products have been destroyed, sometimes even in very subtle ways such as by changing underlying code in ways that causes the competitor's programs to crash or suffer display problems. Two of my favorites, Netscape, and Word Perfect are superior software that is now headed for oblivion. (Although ironically Netscape may rise from the dead in the free Mozilla project!) Quicken, Palm, and Java are on MS's hit list. MS seeks as well to leverage their OS monopoly to control the internet through such devices as .NET and C#. And now that MS has determined open source to be a threat one encounters in the press almost daily misinformation concerning open source alternatives to MS.

It is time to call Microsoft to be responsible, not through corporate welfare by way of giving them assistance in taking over the schools market; but through going back to the good fight to achieve a fair judgement or settlement that will help our nation, and not just reward Microsoft's arrogance at the expense of the future competitiveness of American technology. It is important to keep in mind that Microsoft has actually invented very little, dating back to their fist DOS. They have generally squeezed out and overtaken the competition. A corporation employing these kinds of tactics is definitely not who we want to be in charge of our nation's agenda for computing innovation.

Sincerely,



Rev. R. Scott Prigan